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PP RUEHGR
DE RUEHWN #1364 2991859
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 261859Z OCT 07 ZDS
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5692
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 001364

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PASS LINES)

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR, CA/OCS/ACS/WHA, AND H
DEPT ALSO FOR DS/ITA, DS/IP/WHA AND DS/OSAC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AC](#)
SUBJECT: MINI-WAVE OF VIOLENT CRIME HITS ANTIGUA

11. (sbu) Our contacts confirm Antigua and Barbuda PM Spencer has called out security forces and instituted additional security measures in response to a recent string of violent crimes that have shocked many in Antigua. Our contacts in the police attribute the recent incidents - a string of three gangland-style shootings in as many days - to fights between drug gangs. The killings bring the total number of slayings on the island for the year to 17 - a new record. In the wake of the killings, Spencer announced a 10:00 p.m. curfew for minors, extended hours for local police stations, random stops of pedestrians and motorists, and a ban on windshield tinting. It is unclear how long such measures will remain in place. The mini-wave of violence has left many citizens scared and angry at the seeming inability of the police to stop it.

12. (sbu) COMMENT: This flare-up of violence could not have come at a more inopportune time. Antigua is preparing to host a U.S.-organized multi-national business conference November 8-11, which they hope will attract some 300 U.S. entrepreneurs and a score of U.S. Congressmen, led by New York's Charles Rangel. Reports of shooting wars between drug gangs could seriously impact attendance at the conference. In addition, the PM highlighted in press remarks October 26 that two of the latest victims were deportees with pre-existing drug charges. We are checking with police contacts to verify this. If true, we would not be surprised to see another round of America bashing in local press as Antiguan politicians look to pin the blame for rising drug activity and violent crime on our returnee policy.
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